Application No.: 10/597,199 Page 2 of 4 Docket No.: 20811/0204481-US0

## REMARKS

In view of the following remarks it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

## Status of the Claims

Claims 12-16 are pending in the present application.

## **Specification**

The Office Action requests that the Specification be revised to a preferred layout and requires that the spacing of the lines be adjusted to 1 ½ or double spaced on good quality paper. Applicants respectfully submit that the Substitute Specification as filed with the Preliminary Amendment dated July 14, 2006 was in proper form and had a line spacing of 1 ½. For the Examiner's convenience, attached hereto is a copy of the Substitute Specification on good quality paper.

## Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 12-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,652,780 ("Stoll").

Stoll describes a process for oxidizing iron ions contained within iron-doped lithium niobate. The process includes protonating the iron niobate crystal, pressurizing the crystal and then, while under pressure, heating the pressure to approximately 950°C at a rate not to exceed 50°C per minute. See Abstract.

{W:\20811\0204481-us0\01504714.DOC @@@@@@@@@@@@@@}}

Application No.: 10/597,199 Page 3 of 4 Docket No.: 20811/0204481-US0

Independent claim 12 recites "removing the liberated electrons from the crystal using an external current source during the oxidation." It is respectfully submitted that Stoll does not teach or suggest at least this feature. In contrast, Stoll merely describes de-protonation by heating and simultaneous applying of an electric field. See Stoll, column 5, lines 7-10. Indeed, the Office Action acknowledges, at page 6, that Stoll "does not exactly teach removing freed electrons using an external current source."

The Office Action asserts, however, that "in the absence of unobvious results, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to determine through routine experimentation the optimal process parameter limitation in order to ensure proper orientation." To the extent this statement is understood, it is respectfully submitted that the feature of removing the liberated electrons from the crystal using an external current source during the oxidation, as recited in independent claim 12, would not be obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art. Indeed, as set for the in the Substitute Specification at paragraph 0034 on page 7, in comparison to a conventional treatment,

the method according to the present invention [which includes the feature of removing the liberated electrons from the crystal using an external current source during the oxidation, as recited in independent claim 12] achieves absorption values at least one order of magnitude lower than the values achievable heretofore. As a result, the optical absorption in the visible spectral region is markedly reduced while at the same time providing high dark conductivity.

Because Stoll does not teach or suggest the feature of removing the liberated electrons from the crystal using an external current source during the oxidation, as recited in independent claim 12, it is respectfully submitted that Stoll does not render obvious claim 12 or any of its dependent claims.